

Full front view of Balinese male masked dancer in yellow costume

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A Balinese male masked dancer stands facing forward with his long fingernailed hands bent forward in front of his chest.

The dancer's wooden mask is painted white with a dark moustache, large mouth, and round bulging eyes. The character's costume includes a tall gold crown and a yellow, black, and red sequined tunic. The character's long fingernails look fierce, but they also generally symbolize characters of high birth who do not do manual labor.

In Bali, masked character dances are based on long stories not played out on stage but well known to the audience. Many of the male dances relate to epics of ancient kings. The male dancers intersperse calm and vigorous movements to show the stately power and quick reactions of the ruler.



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